

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL



The Unbelieving Companion

When New Testament Christianity came into existence after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, many married couples obeyed the gospel, and were thereby able to have a Christian home from the beginning. Many other couples, however, found themselves in a divided situation. One had become a Christian but the other had not. The question then arose as to what should be done about the unbelieving companion. The Apostle Paul wrote the Corinthian Christians about this, when he said, "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy

husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk, And so ordain I in all churches." (1 Corinthians 7:12-17).

From the statements made then several points seem to stand out:

1. If one has an unbelieving companion, and that person is willing to continue the marriage, then the Christian should not divorce or leave that companion.
2. The unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified, or set apart, by the Christian. That is, in the first place, the law of marriage is universal and is binding upon all. Where the unbelieving companion is willing to live with the Christian in peace, and thus fulfilling the marriage vows, then that marriage is made holy or acceptable to God. If the unbelieving husband or wife should be considered unclean in this case then that would make the children of that couple unclean as well, that is, they would be considered illegitimate. But the marriage is lawful and therefore the children are the fruits of a holy union.
3. If the unbelieving companion should not be willing to continue the marriage under the circumstances, and therefore, he or she should depart from their companion, then in this case, the Christian is not responsible for this action, and therefore, God will not hold that one responsible. If the unbelieving companion is unfaithful to the Christian, by committing the sin of fornication, then in that case, the Christian is free to marry again. If the separation is merely on the basis of religion, however, and unfaithfulness is not involved, then the Christian is not free to marry again. Rather, the Christian should be ready to receive the unbeliever back, should he or she, desire to return.
4. If the Christian will but be faithful to the Lord, and have patience, then it may well be that, he or she, may be able to win their unbelieving companion to the Lord. That is, in time, they may be converted to Christ.

5. Each one is to remain as the Lord called him. This is on the basis, of course, that one is in a situation where they can scripturally continue in the relationship that they find themselves in at the time that he or she became a Christian. This would be true of one's work, position, and also his or her marriage.

In the foregoing we have been dealing with a situation where neither the man or woman were Christians when they married. Then, either the husband or wife, becomes a Christian, and thus the problem is created, or its possible for it to become a problem in the sense that the marriage may be destroyed in the case of where the unbelieving husband or wife is not willing to tolerate their Christian companion. However, as already indicated, it is possible for this to be worked out, and even for the Christian to convert the unbelieving partner.

Now in the case of a person being a Christian, and not yet married, then the scriptures emphatically teach that the Christian is to marry only a Christian. The Apostle Paul exhorts that Christians are not to be unequally yoked together, that is, they are not to enter into such relationships with unbelievers that will make it almost impossible, if not completely impossible, for them to remain a Christian in that relationship. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

There are times when a Christian may become entangled in a marriage with an unbeliever either before they were aware of the dangers involved, or else they stubbornly went on and married the unbeliever on the basis that they are sure they can convert that person after marriage. There are still other cases where the parents may force their son or daughter to marry an unbeliever. In such cases, what can be done? Once one is in a state of having an unbelieving companion, then as in the case that we noticed earlier, in 1 Corinthians 7, it is just a matter of, first, putting forth every effort to make the marriage work, and second, to likewise put forth a definite effort to convert the unbelieving companion.

The Apostle Peter had something to say along this line and you are invited to give special attention to what he said: "Likewise,

ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives: While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Peter 3:1-4). Please notice that Peter emphasizes these points:

1. The Christian wife should be sure that she is a good wife, and therefore, in subjection to her husband to the extent that she is able to do so and still be a Christian.
2. If it is not possible to convert the husband through direct preaching or teaching of the word, then it may be that he can be won through the godly life of his Christian wife, as he sees in her traits and qualities that would influence him to obey God.
3. It would be a mistake to try to influence and win him by going along with the things that he wants to do, through appealing to him through the "outward adorning of the plaiting of the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on apparel." This will not lead to his conversion but it will only encourage him to continue as he is.

While Peter was speaking of the wife in this case, and how she might win her unbelieving husband, the same in general might be true of the husband in trying to win the unbelieving wife. Often times the Christian man or woman, talks and nags their companion about becoming a Christian to the point that it may have the opposite effect. That doesn't mean that they shouldn't try to teach them, but they should use good judgment, and if the teaching method fails, then they should rely, as already noted, on the influence of a good Christian example. But again, sometimes they use the approach of trying to please them by staying at home with them, or going to their place of worship. Of course none of these things will lead the unbelieving mate to obey God. On the other

hand, if the Christian will make up their mind that they are going to put their Lord first in their life, that they are going to live daily for Christ, that they are going to be faithful to the Lord and worship him every first day of the week, that they are going to be patient and gentle and loving with their unbelieving companion, then this will do more than anything else to teach them, to influence them, and to encourage them to obey God. When that person finds out that you are serious about your Christianity, that you intend to be faithful to the Lord, then this will make a definite impression on him or her for good.

So in closing, I would encourage you, if you find yourself in one of these situations, to make up your mind that you are going to be a faithful Christian. It may well be that through your dedication and faithfulness to the Lord that this will lead your companion to become a Christian. If that person is still not moved to obey God, don't give up. Just go on being faithful to the Lord and some day then your husband or wife, whichever the case may be, may finally decide to obey the gospel. But whether they do or not, you must remember that you are a Christian, and you must be faithful to the Lord for the sake of your soul, for the sake of your companion, with the prayer that he or she one day will obey God, and you must be faithful for the sake of your children, realizing that their souls are in your hands to teach and influence for the Lord. If you will do this then surely things will work out for your good and for the good of all involved.



**associate
editorial**

Rules of the Kingdom of Heaven

There are some places where we do not want to go. But there are also some places where we do like to go. Heaven is the place

where all of us desire to go. All people of all religions and faiths wish to go into heaven. Surely, you want to go there and I too. But like going into a country, we must comply with the rules of the country we wish to enter, so there are definite rules of the kingdom of heaven and we all must follow them to enter into the country of God.

At one place Christ said, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20). So we understand that one's righteousness *must* exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees to enable him to enter into the kingdom of heaven. But how righteous were the scribes and the Pharisees? Speaking about them Christ said, "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi." (Matthew 23:5-7). And then he said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but with ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matthew 23:23-28).

So we observe: those scribes and Pharisees did all their works of righteousness only to be seen by men. They wore such robes which would identify them being religious. They loved to be called by titles such as Rabbi, and loved praise of men. Whatever they gave and whatever they did, it was all for the only purpose, that is, to be seen of men. It is therefore, Christ who said unto them,

that they outwardly appeared righteous unto men but within they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity. In other words, they were not sincere. Now, for our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, then we should be sincere with our God in whatever we do, say or give. We should not do religiously anything for the purpose of getting praise of men but rather because God commands us to do that. In Psalm 119:172 the inspired writer says, "For all thy commandments are righteousness." Therefore for our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of scribes and the Pharisees, and thus to enable us to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must do all that God has commanded us to do. (Matthew 7:21).

Secondly, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3). So we learn, one must humble himself like a little child to enter into the kingdom of God, that is, one cannot enter into heaven with pride, sin and hypocrisy. Little children have no pride or arrogance in them, they are always humble, they accept whatever their parents give them and depend on them for all their needs. So must we humble ourselves before our God. Peter said, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5:6). Little children are without sin and hypocrisy, their hearts are clean. So must we also become sinless by obeying Christ's commands. (Mark 16:16).

Thirdly, once when Jesus was speaking with a man whose name was Nicodemus, he told him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except of man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:3-5). So, we know that all who would want to enter into heaven must be born again, and this new birth, Christ explained, is of the water and of the Spirit. Thus, when a person hear God's word, which the holy men of God wrote in the Bible, as they were moved or inspired to write, by the holy

Spirit of God (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16), and after believing in His Son Christ, and turning away from sin, is baptized (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of sins, then he is born again, born of water and of the Spirit.

In the last page of the Bible we have this wonderful promise: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14).

Antiques

Richard E. Stephens

It was such a strange sight that I turned at the next intersection and went around the city block to see if I had really seen it. I was traveling through a small northwestern Indiana town and I had only briefly noticed the old church building as I passed it the first time. The sign out front, however, had caught my attention, and I went around the block. It really did see what I thought it did—ANTIQUES. The church building had been converted from a place of worship into a store for the sale of antiques.

Since an antique is usually something that is old and out of use I could not help but wonder just how many church buildings around the world could fitly carry this sign out front. So many have become "antiques" in the lives of the people they serve. So many are only meeting places for Sunday morning where people simply go through a form. The form sort of represents what the people once were but have become "old and out of use." (We are not talking about a physical old age but a spiritual, mental one.) So many buildings have become only social gathering places where the original purpose for gathering together has long been forgotten in committees, councils and creed writing. Long since forsaken has been the needs of men for a spiritual contact with God. Long forgotten is the quest for identification and a way whereby men

may find the forgiveness of sin. Maybe someone should go around with antiques signs marking the buildings that fitly fill the title.

It is no longer unusual for someone to say, "I'm very religious, but I'll have nothing to do with organized religion." The robes, candles, and organ music are a long way from the pattern of the Carpenter of Nazareth. Maybe it is time we found our way back to the simplicity of the church in the first century. Maybe, just maybe, we'll find out that this is what people have been wanting and needing all along. Maybe the rest should take their rightful place along with the antiques.

Defenseless Love

John Gipson

"And they moved from there and dug another well, and over that they did not quarrel; so he called its name Rehoboth..."

—Genesis 26:22

Rehoboth is not a household word. It's the name of a well, but it is more than that. Rehoboth speaks of defenseless love. Let me tell you the story.

Centuries ago a man by the name of Isaac dwelt in the land of Gerar. He planted a crop and reaped in the same year a hundred-fold. Everything went his way and he soon became rich. The Philistines envied him and wanted him to move on. "You are mightier than we," they complained. So as an encouragement the Philistines filled all of his wells with dirt. And Isaac? He pulled up stakes and moved to the valley. Here he digs again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of Abraham his father. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarrel with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." And Isaac? He moves on and digs another well. They quarrel over that one also. And Isaac? He moves yet again and digs another well, and over this one they did not quarrel. Isaac called it Rehoboth, saying, "For the Lord has made

room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

Behind Rehoboth is a heap of patience, self-control and defenseless love. How easy it would have been for Isaac to give in to retaliation, revenge and repayment. And who would have condemned him? "He has his rights. He's justified in fighting for what is his." But Isaac would have none of it. He went right on moving and digging.

Not all men are like Isaac. Consider Nikita Krushchev who once said, "We Communists have many things in common with the teachings of Jesus Christ. "But," he continued, "My sole difference with Christ is that when someone hits me on the right cheek, I hit him on the left so hard that his head falls off." That's the way a lot of folks are built.

Jesus calls men to a far more noble practice than putting up one's dukes :

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

—Matthew 5:38,39

It's desperately difficult to do, but don't trip over this command. In your next personal conflict remember Isaac, and let "Rehoboth" be your watchword.

'Grasshopper' Preaching

J.J. Turner

Jump, jump, jump, may well describe the approach many preachers take in their preaching. Like a grass-hopper, they jump from text to text in their sermons. One may sit and listen to them

for years and never really learn the textual setting of a verse or the overall message of the Bible and how it all fits together.

This is not to say an occasional topical sermon is wrong. Neither is it saying that using a verse to get into a sermon is wrong on certain occasions. It is saying, however, that the perpetual practice of jumping from verse to verse is *not* the best way to educate people in God's word. A text must not be used as a "pretext."

The preaching of the Bible is God's plan for the evangelist: "Preach the word..." (1 Timothy 4:1), is his rule. And yet, this rule may be one of the most neglected relative to his sermon content. To launch *from* a text is not preaching the word in the fullest sense. Neither does a casual referring to a passage do justice to preaching the word. Preaching the word occurs when the verses are explained and applied in harmony with the context. This is why preachers need to preach *through* the Bible and not around it. They must preach *in* the Bible and not about it. There is a difference!

Grasshopper preaching will lead to a misunderstanding of preaching. The preacher and hearers must know that God demands the whole book be preached. This prevents destruction because of a lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:8). A full diet of the word is essential to spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:1). We must not settle for less.

As God's spokesmen, may we never appear as "grasshoppers" in a "giant land of ignorance."

The Greatness Of The Church

John Waddey

The church of Christ is the greatest institution the world has ever known. It is a divine institution and we should never think

of it in terms of an ordinary worldly thing, nor should we act toward it as such. The church is Christ's Kingdom on earth over which he reigns (Matt. 16:16-18). One cannot be loyal to Christ without being loyal also to his kingdom, the church. Christians and the world need to appreciate the church more. We will now notice some characteristics of its greatness.

1. *The Church is Great Because of It's Founder.*

The founder is a most important factor in the merit of any organization. He sets it in order as to its functions. He gives it a code or standard of operation. His wealth and mentality furnish the life-blood of the institution. An organization will usually reflect the spirit and ideas of its founder. Jesus founded the church (Matt. 16:18). He did all of these things for his church. It is our obligation to reflect his divine spirit and ideas in the life and conduct of the church. Paul exhorts us to "have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus..." (Phil. 2:5). Again, he writes, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

2. *The Church is Great Because of the Price Paid for it.*

Most worldly concerns were founded to enrich the founder. Even many churches began for this purpose. The Lord's church was not established for financial gain. What could the Creator want to extract from the work of his own hands? (See John 1:3). His purpose for the church was to benefit lost mankind. He purchased the church with his own blood when he died the accursed death on Calvary (Acts 20:28). To give us the church he humbled and emptied himself of his equality with the Father and became a servant of men, willing even to die for humanity (Phil. 2:5-8). He taught mankind that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

3. *The Church Is Great Because of Its Relation to Christ.*

There are several ways of comparing or describing the church. It is the spiritual body of which Christ is head (Eph. 1:22). It is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22, 32). The church is the kingdom of

Christ and he reigns as its only king and lawgiver (Matt. 16:18-19). It is his army and he is our captain and leader (Heb. 2:10; 11 Tim. 2:3-4). The church is his family, for they do the will of his Father in heaven (Matt. 12:50). There is a certain honor that comes from intimate association with great people. How much more honor is there to the church to be so wonderfully associated with King Jesus. While we ponder this point, ask yourself, "Can I be saved out of Christ's kingdom; out of his army; out of his family?" The obvious answer is no. But since to be in his church is to be in all of these, to be a member of his church is to be saved.

4. *The Church Is Great Because of Its Mission.*

The great purpose of the church is to save lost men from sin and damnation by winning them to Jesus. It is charged with preaching the gospel to the whole creation (Mk. 16:15). It helps sinners reform their lives and be translated into God's kingdom on earth (Col. 1:13). It prepares men for heaven (Eph 4:11-15; II Pet. 1:10-11).

Christ's church is not a political power like Catholicism, nor is it an economic power like the Latter Day Saints church. It is not war-like like Islam. Rather, the church evangelizes, telling all men the good news about Christ and salvation. It serves the unfortunate and keeps Christians in faithful service (Eph. 4:11-12). As a great beacon light it holds forth the word of life to a world lost in the darkness of sin and error. (I Tim. 3:15).

5. *The Church is Great Because of Its Blessings.*

James tells us that every good and perfect gift comes down from God (1:17). These blessings are available to humanity *within* the church. There are certain privileges and blessings available to men in India. You may read of these blessings in a book or hear of them from others, but you will not receive them until you enter in. So with the church. You must become a member to enjoy the benefits. Salvation in heaven awaits faithful members of the church (Eph. 5:23). Every spiritual blessing is available in Christ, i.e., in his church (Eph. 1:3-7). There are such wonderful

privileges as sonship to God, fellowship and brotherhood with all other Christians, communion, prayer and providential care from God are yours. There are great opportunities to serve God and your fellow man in the greatest institution on planet Earth, as we work to make the world a better place in which to live. Really, there is no way to adequately measure these rich blessings.

6. *The Church Is Great Because of the People Who Compose it.*

They are called Christians because they strive to be like Christ. They are called saints because they are the ones who are dedicated to God's service. They are in the world, yet they do not live like the sinful world (John 17:14). True Christians are honorable, humble, generous, pure, well-informed, truthful, faithful, benevolent, devoted, diligent, and loyal. No, they are not perfect, nor are they angels. But with God's help they are daily growing into the image of Christ by the renewing of their minds (Rom. 12:1-2). What great joy it is to be a part of God's family on earth.

7. *The Church is Great Because of Its Ultimate Goal.*

Paul taught the Ephesian Christians that Christ is the saviour of the body (the church) and that he will one day present the church to himself in glory (Eph. 5:23, 27). In I Cor. 15:24, the same writer, says, "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God..." John in a glorious vision saw the new Jerusalem, the church, in the presence of God in the heavenly paradise (Rev. 21:1-4; Heb. 12:22-23). Throughout eternity the church of Jesus Christ will reign in holy triumph with the loving Father, the victorious Son and the Holy Spirit.

We should realize that it is a matchless privilege to be a member of the greatest organization the world has ever known. Prophets predicted its coming. Kings and holy men desired to see the day. The rich and the poor, every devout God-fearing soul, even publicans and harlots, have eagerly sought to enter into the church of our Lord. We who are so privileged should constantly watch lest we by our conduct or speech shame or stain its holy reputation.

All men are invited to seek refuge within its sacred precincts. If you will but let God wash away your sins, He will add you to His Church (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12:13).

'He Didn't Mean Any Harm'

Joe Goodspeed

The big tall moving van was barreling down a residential street at 35 miles an hour. The driver steered that big giant directly *through* the overhanging branches of a royal poinciana, leaving a pile of mutilated limbs behind. Why didn't he check his overhead clearance? I never wished so much for a C.B. Radio in all my life.

You are walking down the street after a big rain. And here comes a car ninety-to-nothing. The driver somehow gets one of his wheels just right into the middle of a big puddle, and you are splattered good with muddy water. Did he mean to get you? Or was it just thoughtlessness? The result is the same.

You are talking with a friend who is just crushed by some offensive words someone recklessly hurled out. You try to help soothe things over, but you can't help wondering, "Couldn't they have been a little more careful?" You become convinced that less damage would have been done if your wounded friend had been kicked with a boot or gashed with a knife. You understand "they didn't mean any harm," but that really doesn't change things, does it?

"The unkind word we might have kept,
who knows how hard it pierced and stung,
The word we had not sense to say,
who knows how grandly it could have rung?"

A drunk meant no harm, but that doesn't bring back the lives of those he killed with his car. The thoughtless Christian didn't mean any harm by his absence, but he helped to kill Bible School.

The indifferent church member may not have mean any harm, but he dampened the spirit of the church and helped to squelch its enthusiasm by his ho-hum, lifeless ways.

The issue is not really whether we *meant* any harm or not, but whether we *did* good or bad. We are responsible for maintaining a sensitivity and alertness that leads us to doing the good and avoiding doing the hurtful. Think about it!

Put Them To Death !

Dick Cupp

Have you put your worldly self to death?

That's exactly what the apostle Paul says you must do in Colossians 3:5-11. He mentions several things the Christian must "mortify," or "put to death," including fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness. Rather than live in these sins any more, the Christian must turn his life into an "instrument of righteousness" (Romans 6:12-13).

Your flesh is the same after baptism as it was before, but as a Christian you learn to control your desires. In Galatians 6:14, Paul says that "putting to death" involves a double crucifixion. "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." You learn not to want what the world has to offer; you reject it; you crucify yourself to it, and it to you. You just don't live in sin any more! You learn to be a penitent Christian.

When one lives in these sins, he can only look forward to God's wrath (Colossians 3:6). It's another way of saying "You're going to reap exactly what you sow!"

How the world needs to learn that lesson! People have been telling us for years that we're *not* going to reap what we sow—that we can "do our own thing"—"if it feels good, do it." We're told

that we can go out and get drunk, and it won't hurt us; that we can violate our marriage vows; that we can be irresponsible citizens; that we can spend more money than we make—and still be happy. It just doesn't work that way!

The lesson Paul is teaching is simply this : when you go against God's word and live by your own philosophies, it's going to destroy you—physically, spiritually, or both. You're going to reap what you sow!

Paul continues his list of things to put to death in verses 8 and 9: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, foul language and lying. How many of us have not been guilty of some of these things? But now, Paul says, we must get rid of them, because we have "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him" (verse 10).

If you're a Christian, you're in Christ. You've put off the old man of sin. The kind of conduct Paul mentions just isn't acceptable any more. You need to put these things to death, and put on the new man, walking in "newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

SALVATION ? WONDER WHAT THAT MEANS ?

Jack Exum

The message of the word is "Salvation"! Yet, have you pondered the meaning of that term? Saved! From what, with what, for what? Let's take a brief look in one chapter of Romans and see just how the term applies.

SAVED FROM SIN

"What shall we say then, Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1). Paul will stress in verses that follow an emphatic "No", for believers are saved *from* sin. But you say "Which one?" Paul says in effect "all of them."

You see, when God saves a man, he saves him from the principle of sin, delivers him from the bondage of sin, and lifts him out of a life of sin. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:1). God, through his son, was dealing with the sins of the world (John 3:16).

This was his plan from the beginning (Genesis 3:15) that was reconfirmed again and again through the patriarchs and prophets. This was the great mystery of how both Jews and Gentiles (all living inhabitants) would become beneficiaries of his grace. The blood of Christ covers, not only past sins, but present sins, and those even yet to be committed and lived. "By grace"—"in Christ", "Praise God", all sins are forgiven.

SAVED FROM THE POWER OF SIN

Paul says in Romans 6:2-11, that the principle of sin was dealt with in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. All believers have *DIED* to the old life, have been buried (planted) with Christ in his tomb (baptism) and was raised to walk in newness of life. The old life (man) has been crucified, and the body of sin destroyed—and thus the dead have been "set free" (Saved).

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourself unto God, as those that are *ALIVE FROM THE DEAD* and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God...*FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION OVER YOU...*" (Romans 8:12-14). Not only are we saved from our past sin, we are given power to conquer and live above daily sins. This is the crux of Paul's argument, "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein." (Romans 6:2).

PUNISHMENT OF SIN

Paul closes the chapter with these words, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

With the "principle of sin" destroyed, and the "power to conquer sin" enthroned, the "punishment of sin" is no more. We have been saved, and in all three ways this salvation is mirrored and glorified.

We were not saved from sin to flounder as a fish out of water. We are given grace and power to live the rich and noble life in which we have been planted and raised. Neither were we saved from past sins only to be threatened by the punishment of present or future sins, for "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from *all* sin" (I John 1:7). This is past, present and future sins, under the saving power of God in Christ.

Hence, every believer has attended his own funeral, and if he glanced over his shoulder as he was raised, he might have caught a glimpse of the old life being buried, as he was being raised to walk in newness of life. We have judged ourselves unworthy, and thus, we came into Christ. He is both worthy and able.

Stay in Christ, for there is no hope outside!

Salvation is in Christ! !

HOW TO HAVE IT AND LOSE IT

Jerry Shaw

"For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

—Matthew 25:29

Victorious Roman legions, left behind to rule defeated Spain, built an aqueduct in Segovia in A.D. 109. For 1800 years, sixty generations, that aqueduct carried sparkling water to hot and dusty Segovians. About the turn of the twentieth century, thoughtful Spaniards decided that the aqueduct should be relieved of its age-old labor. So they laid modern pipelines and stopped the flow

that for years had gushed in the aqueduct. Shortly thereafter, the aqueduct began to crumble and fall apart. The blazing sun dried the mortar and caused it to crumble. The stones sagged and fell. Soon the whole thing lay in ruins. What ages of service and work could not destroy, idleness finished it off in a very brief time. Ages of toil and labor did not hurt it. Inactivity caused its death.

This story presents to us a truth that should be printed indelibly on our minds—disuse brings decay. This principle is written upon every line of life. Everything is marked with the verdict, "use it or lose it." We need to learn the lesson well. If we use our talents we will be entrusted with other talents, "for unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance..." But if we allow our talents and abilities to lay dormant they will be taken from us. We will lose even what we have.

Faith, unused, will crumble and decay. Perhaps the surest way to die spiritually is to become idle. Faith fades away in inactivity. However, faith used will develop and become stronger.

You can have it and lose it simply by refusing to use it. It is either do or die. Use it or lose it. Paul encourages us to keep what we have and gain more by "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

PROBLEMS : WITHIN AND WITHOUT

(The reader should study Acts 5 in connection with this article.)

Ken Samuel

The previous chapter closes on a high note as we view the strong infant church having unity and corresponding success. The church was on the move, and many, like Barnabas, were more than happy to sell their possessions and use the proceeds to guarantee the church's continued growth and development.

There is a three letter word which can serve as a stop sign to any progressive program of work however. These three little letters are quick to "butt" against the flow of a progressing program anywhere, and bring the progress to an abrupt halt. The word (appearing as the first word of chapter five in the King James' and American Standard Versions) introduces chapter 5. It's the word, "But..."

Satan will not leave the church alone for very long. He instigates persecutions from without and stirs up problems within. Generally, the internal problems are more frustrating and damaging than the external pressures.

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was a hypocritical pretension motivated by two inordinate loves: (1) The love of money (See, also, I Timothy 5:10), and (2) the love for the praise of men. Peter judged them as having "lied to the Holy Spirit" (v. 3). In the next verse he says, "You have not lied to men but to God." (This underscores the guilt of their sin, and also clearly establishes the identity or nature of the Holy Spirit as Deity, since Peter refers to Him as "God.")

Upon hearing Peter's judgment, Ananias fell dead; and later his wife suffered the same punishment. "The time and fashion of all our deaths are with him. If one day his mercy turned to judgment, and he took from the earth two forfeited lives for the warning and the bettering of many, who shall say that either the lesson was dearly bought or that the penalty was undeserved? It is well that men should be taught once for all, by sudden death treading swiftly on the heels of the detected sin, that the gospel, which discovers God's boundless mercy, has not wiped out the sterner attributes of the judge" (*Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 18, p. 187).

Several very practical lessons leap off the page and confront us today: (1) The first internal problem in the church centered around the love of money, the root of all evil. (2) God can work good out of evil. (3) Serious sin can be connected with acts which outwardly appear virtuous and godly. (4) We should never do wrong just because we judge it a little wrong. The Psalmist

reminded us, "Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults." (Psalms 19:12). (5) Good in an action will not offset the bad of it, nor any other action. (6) Forgetting God's all-seeing eye can be a fatal mistake.

The remainder of the chapter (vs. 12-42) is concerned with another persecution creating problems from without. In this, however, the persuasion of the Sanhedrin Council by a good man named Gamaliel quieted the tension.

The glory of this story is this: The Word spreads and the church grows in spite of its problems within and without. Our Christ is bigger than any of our problems!

Know The Bible

MARVIN RAINEY

RELIGIOUS SINNERS: Does the term religious sinner sound like a contradiction? Christianity is religion, but not all religion is Christianity. It is highly possible for people to be honest but honestly mistaken, sincere, but sincerely in error, religious but religiously wrong. It is possible for one to be a "Religious Sinner". The Pharisees of Christ's day were very religious, and yet they were denounced by Christ in severe terms. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 5:20). There are different ways in which one can be a religious sinner.

BY WORSHIPING THE WRONG GOD. Idolatry was forbidden under the law (Ex. 20:2-4). Although idolatry was forbidden the people of the Old Testament continually forgot God and worshiped idols. They were religious but they were sinners. It was impossible to please God and worship another god. Joshua called upon his people to choose between the real God and the idol

god. (Joshua 24:15). The people of Athens were said to be very religious, but if he worships other gods, then he is a religious sinner.

BY WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD IN THE WRONG WAY. This can be done by omitting, adding to, or substituting. We are told not to add or take from the word (Rev. 22:19) and when we do we sin. Nadab and Abihu substituted strange fire for the Lord's fire. (Lev. 10). This was not pleasing to the Lord and they were killed. There are many today who are guilty of worshipping God by adding to or taking away from the word. We should examine all that we do to see if we are worshiping as God directs us or if we are following men.

BY BEING A WORSHIPER, YET HAVING NEVER OBEYED THE TRUE GOSPEL. Cornelius, a devout man who feared God, stood in need of salvation. (Acts 10:1-4). The man from Ethiopia who was converted under the preaching of Philip was already a religious man. (Acts 8:26-39). The audience on Pentecost was composed of Jews who were "devout men." (Acts 2). Many today are morally good, attend services, engage in the acts of worship and still their worship is vain because they are not children of God. They are religious sinners.

SCENES AT THE JUDGMENT

W. A. Bradfield

That there is a great day of judgment is certain. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9: 27.) Christ was raised for that purpose. "He . . . was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." (Acts 10: 42.) "Inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts 17:31.)

THE GREATEST CROWD

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according

to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10.) All the races of men from Adam until the end of time will be there. This includes the rich and the poor; the great and the small; the black and the white. It also includes *you* and *me*.

THE GREATEST JUDGE

"And, behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. 22: 12.) In 2 Tim. 4: 8 Paul said: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." In this life there are many things that may influence the course of justice in our courts—wealth, color, political prominence, etc.—but this will not be so at the judgment. Everyone will stand on his own record. Each will receive justice but not mercy. The day of mercy will then be past. No mistakes will be made by the great judge that day.

THE GREATEST BOOKS

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books." (Rev. 20: 12.)

In John 12: 48, Jesus said: "He that rejected me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

What a great combination of books, "The Books"—the Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament. "The Book of Life"—heaven's record of man. The books contain what God requires of man. The book of life contains what man did about these requirements. The Bible will read at the judgment just like it reads now.

THE GREATEST SEPARATION

The son of man will separate the human family as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The sheep will be on the right

and the goats on the left hand. (Matt. 25: 31-46.) Where will you stand that day? There will be a father on one side and a mother on the other; a brother on one side and a sister on the other; parents on one side and a son or daughter on the other. All could stand together now with the Lord and be saved. Remember, this separation will be for all eternity—~~forever~~. **THE GREATEST VERDICT** “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” (Matt. 25: 46.) “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25: 34.) “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25: 41.) This one pronouncement will determine the eternal destiny of the whole world. We should now be getting ready for that great day. It will be too late then to make preparation.

BURIED WITH CHRIST

Charles Harlan

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” (Rom. 6:5) The Word of God teaches as clearly, simply, and plainly as possible that our sharing “the likeness of his resurrection” depends upon sharing “the likeness of his death.” Seeing that sharing the likeness of his death is so important, how may we do that? To find the answer, we have only to study the two verses which proceed the quotation from verse five, and one following it. Verse three says “baptized into his death,” verse four says “buried with him by baptism into death,” and verse six, “our old man is crucified with him.” It should be obvious from this that we may share “the likeness of his death” by crucifying the old man through baptism. Twice the Word says “baptized into death.” That’s what baptism is, “the likeness of his death.” Since sharing his resurrection

depends upon sharing his death, then being resurrected like him (incorruptible) depends upon being baptized.

Now one more thing, notice verse four. "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." As Christ was raised from the grave to a new life, so we are raised from the grave of baptism to live a new life. (vs. 4) We actually become a "new creature" in Christ (II Cor 5: 17) when we are born again to "newness of life" through baptism. All this being true, one cannot be saved without being baptized, and a "baptism" for any reason other than crucifying an old sinful man to receive a new life free of sin cannot save. If you have neglected this vital aspect of obedience to God from lack of understanding, or because someone has failed to teach you the whole counsel of God, then call the nearest *Gospel* preacher and ask his assistance in obeying the Word of God!

FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD HAS ITS COST

Garland Elkins

After the Jews had returned from the captivity and had gone far enough with their building program that the people of the land saw that they were going to succeed, they offered to have a part in the work. This same principle has been reenacted in the life of the church in many given communities. When the church was established by a small, and what the community might consider, insignificant group of people, the community pays little attention to the church. However, after the saints have struggled and sacrificed to the point of building a commodious meeting house and have perhaps converted some of the community leaders, then the denominations take notice of the church and are willing to be classed as a "sister denomination" with them. Christians must ever be aware that friendship of the world always comes on condition of concession. The adversaries of Zerubbabel claimed that they worshipped the same God that he and his brethren worshipped. However, these adversaries did not claim to be converted

to the true way of worship, but implied that their way of worship should be accepted by the Jews. So it is that the denominational world wishes to fellowship the church. Fellowship is offered on the condition that the church of the Lord will accept the work and worship of the false religions on a par with its own. It is often the case that they do not demand that we change the doctrine or our manner of worship, but it is also true that their friendship is extended on the condition that we do not demand any change in their doctrines and manner of worship.

If Zerubbabel and his fellow-Jews had accepted the offer of these men, their number would have been increased, but it would have been at the expense of truth, unity and the approval of God. So it is today when the church of the Lord makes concessions to the world to gain friendship. They may appear stronger outwardly, but inwardly they will be weaker because of their compromise. Such is true because we are taught, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them." (Eph. 5:11). So serious is the matter of condoning error that the beloved John wrote: "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (II Jno. 9-11).

When those in religious error make offers of fellowship; if they are sincere and honest, we should teach them the truth, urge them to renounce error and to "cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord." (Acts 13:10). In no case can we afford to compromise the truth.

A refusal to accept the world's friendship takes courage. Because we do not desire to be unnecessarily offensive, it takes much discernment, love for the truth, and firmness to turn down an offer of friendship, which a true Christian cannot accept. That is especially true, when we know that a refusal of the world's friendship will cause persecution. (Jno. 15:7, 18; II Tim. 3:12).

A refusal to accept the world's friendship may (and often does) arouse criticism within our own ranks. In most congregations there is an uninformed element and also a worldly element which are courting the friendship of the world. When the faithful and discerning members reject the offer of the world to compromise, the worldly members become vociferous in their criticism of the faithful. Sometimes congregations are torn asunder because compromisers demand that the church either practice or tolerate the way of the world.

Zerubbabel and his brethren were willing to pay the cost of purity. When we compromise we do so at the loss of purity in doctrine, morals and thus in spirituality.

All members of the church need to read, believe and apply the principle as set out in Ezra 4:3. "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel." In effect Zerubbabel was rejecting their offer of a "union meeting" with those who were in reality enemies of God. When our compromising brethren enter into "union meetings" with the Christian Church and others, they are guilty of compromise. They need to learn not to do this and this lesson can be learned from Zerubbabel. (Rom. 15:4; Ezra 4:3).

When the followers of error saw that God's people would not compromise, they then demonstrated that they were only professing friends, therefore, truly enemies of the people of God. It is recorded, "Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building." (Ezra 4:4). They discouraged the work and sought to hinder it in every possible way. They offered to be friends on their own terms, based upon God's people being willing to compromise. When the Jews would not do so, they hired counselors to represent them in Babylon, to render the decree of Cyrus ineffective. Eventually, they were able to gather enough strength to stop the work entirely, at least for a time. (Ezra 4:7-24).

The work of rebuilding the temple was not resumed until the second year of the reign of Darius, about 520 B.C. This was done under the encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah. Tatnai and his associates asked the Jews who gave them authority to build. The Jews replied that Cyrus, not only gave them authority to build, but he also gave them material assistance. Then Tatnai and his associates wrote a letter to Darius, the kings, and requested that a search be made in the king's treasure house to see if Cyrus made any such decree. Darius made the search and wrote Tatnai and said, "Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place." (Ezra 6:7). Ezra informs us: "And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." (Ezra 6:15).

WRONG IS WRONG

Mack Lyon

In a time of sagging morals, Satan provides many rationalizations for improper behavior. Those who would live faithful
(Contd on last page.)

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ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO LISTEN

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Christian lives must not be "ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11). Wrong is wrong despite our efforts to excuse our actions.

Wrong Is Wrong, Even If You Don't Get Caught. From "little things" like littering the highways and breaking the speed limits to "more serious offenses" such as adultery and stealing, our society seems to think the only wrong is getting caught. It just isn't so. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).

Wrong Is Wrong, Even If You Do It for A Good Cause. The honorable purpose does not justify a dishonorable deed. Many who would not think of gambling, have no resistance to buying a raffle ticket or playing bingo if the proceeds go to a "good cause". Stealing is stealing even if it is done by a mother who does it to feed children neglected and abandoned by their fathers.

Wrong is Wrong, Even If Others Do Worse Things. It will be little comfort to you in the judgement, if you should be lost, that others you know did things which you considered to be worse than your sins.

Wrong Is Wrong, Even If It Doesn't Bother Your Conscience. Conscience can be trained to accept wrong-doing, but sin is a transgression of God's law (I John 3:4) and whoever transgresses God's Law has sinned, even if his conscience does approve.

Wrong Is Wrong, Even If It Is Commonly Considered Alright. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). The Christian should "enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Prov. 4:3-15). "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

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